**New Deliberative Democracy Cohort hits the ground running**

**The Summit reaches out to citizens**

[Deliberative Democracy Cohort — Global Democracy Coalition](https://www.globaldemocracycoalition.org/deliberative-democracy-cohort)

Autocracy has suffered setbacks in Brazil, Ukraine and elsewhere in recent weeks. Now there is more good news for democracy emerging from the Summit, this time on deliberative democracy. A new **Deliberative Democracy and Citizens’ Assembly Cohort**  of the **Summit for Democracy** has been created and the European Commission and Ireland have just signed up to be its political co-leads. The Cohort  is already hard at work on its agenda of 11Commitments. Here’s how it happened.

It’s less than a year since we started on this journey .In December 2021, many in the field of deliberative democracy were a little disappointed with the practical outcomes of the last Summit for Democracy and started to lobby for change.

The Summit had no recognition of -or plan for developing- democracy’s greatest modern success story - the recent wave of over 600 successful citizens’ assemblies across the planet. Deliberative democracy with its many forms was not covered at all in the Cohorts of the 2021 Summit. This was widely acknowledged as being a missing part of the agenda. Now, after serious and respectful conversations with the US State Department, change is underway.

Deliberative democracy now has a global forum in which to be showcased and spread its excellent practice and innovation. By working together with many nations and NGO’s across the planet it is also firing up the leadership and optimism which is needed if we are to win what President Biden in his rallying cry called “the battle for democracy against autocracy”. *Evolving our representative democracies and creating partnerships between citizens and the legislatures and governments that they elect* *is central to deliberation*.

We will be reporting regularly to **GDC** readers on our progress but in this first article we set the scene. Our  campaign centred around two letters -publicly available on [ccukdemocracy.org/latest](https://www.ccukdemocracy.org/latest) suggesting that citizens engagement should play a key role in revitalising modern democracy. The letters were signed by many leading figures in the field, and they are still open if you would like to add your name. We offer our thanks to all those listed in the letters who signed  and supported this successful  aspiration to be more ambitious and pro-active.

The first letter was to President Biden who had inspired the creation of the Summit and the other was to Uzra Zeya the responsible Under Secretary in the United States Government, they shared three main themes-

* We asked for deliberative democracy, especially citizens´ assemblies, to be taken seriously as a part of real all year round activity between the formal Summits for Democracy.
* We set out the case for strengthening the long-term work in individual nations by their having access to democratic infrastructure across the planet. This should include a global What Works evidence centre free and available to all, a global Citizens’ Assembly in permanent session to consider issues around democracy at the request of the Summit, and a global “Marshall Plan” for democracy to energise and focus activity in those new democracies threatened by Autocracy not least in Eastern Europe.
* Our most important “ask” was for the Summit to dedicate a new work stream via a Cohort for Deliberative Democracy and Citizens’ Assemblies, and for it to set out and achieve an agreed global agenda.

We were delighted to receive an encouraging response from Under Secretary Zeya and, working in close cooperation with the US State Department officials, we have created the Cohort to bring these proposals on deliberation to life.

Things are moving along quickly now. A Summit Cohort requires 2 political leads. Ireland with its innovative and pioneering track record on deliberation, and the European Commission with its vast experience in the field, both agreed to lead this work. The EC  demonstrated its commitment  recently by its Future of Europe report, the launch of the Competence centre on participatory and deliberative democracy, and the EU President’s landmark State of the Union speech. This partnership of Ireland ,EC and US State Department  constitute a formidable triumvirate for the expansion of deliberative democracy.

To drive our 11 Commitments forward a core group of Cohort NGO sponsors  has been considering a draft agenda for the Cohort under the sponsorship of the newDemocracy foundation [Australia] led by Iain Walker. It includes includes myself (Citizens’ Convention on UK Democracy) ; Prof Jane Suiter of Dublin City University (Ireland); Dawn Nakagawa of the Berggruen Institute [US]; Yves Dejaeghere of FIDE (Belgium); Claudia Chwalisz of DemocracyNext (International); Dominik Hierlemann of Bertelsmann Stiftung (Germany); Linn Davis of Healthy Democracy (US); and Peter MacLeod of MASS LBP (Canada). We need many other NGO’s from across the planet to contact us to join this work as well as Governments [which the subject of a forthcoming feature]

As an early statement of intent, the Cohort is already working jointly with the Eastern European Group of Democracy R&D and other partners on a package for the new democracies living under threat. More on this ,our proposals for a global What Works organisation ,a global Citizens’ Deliberation on democracy and other developments in future articles.

We believe democracy now has the processes and technology to enable Citizens to be fully engaged with their democracy. We now also have a new organisation keen to join with others to help in this task. Setting up the Cohort is the beginning not the end. The heavy responsibility upon the new Cohort is to be “the grit in the oyster” demonstrating the reach and ambition of the Summit and being an engine to help make deliberation happen locally, nationally and globally.

Friends and colleagues of  deliberative democracy [and given the chance, citizens themselves] are ready and eager to make a constructive contribution to grab this precious opportunity to make our democracy fitter for purpose. Don’t hesitate to contact me on **grahamwilliamallen@outlook.com**

Next time “Building the Global Architecture of deliberative democracy”

**Graham Allen.**

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